



Virginia Commonwealth University takes seriously its mission of public outreach in the life sciences. Specifically, VCU Life Sciences recognizes the importance of this mission and looks for ways to partner with organizations to enhance its educational offerings to the public.

In May 2003, VCU Life Sciences entered into a partnership with the Maymont Foundation in the city of Richmond. Maymont — a beautiful 100-acre estate overlooking the James River — is where the foundation maintains a historic Victorian home, an arboretum and an environmental education center that attracts thousands of visitors every year. Together, VCU Life Sciences and the Maymont Foundation created the Maymont-VCU Discovery Institute, which offers continuing education seminars to the general public in addition to opportunities for undergraduate students and teachers to further their studies and training in the life sciences.

Previous series topics have focused on the James River, discovering the life sciences through art and how the genomic revolution has affected the life sciences. This year's six-part lecture series, held at the Robins Nature & Visitor Center at Maymont, will focus on understanding urban and suburban wildlife by examining your own backyard habitats.

VCU

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VCU Life Sciences  
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# Backyard Wildlife – Pests or Guests?



Understanding Urban  
and Suburban Wildlife

Lecture Series  
2006



# Backyard Wildlife – Pests or Guests?

Understanding Urban and Suburban Wildlife

## March 23 Going wild! Creating wildlife habitats at home

Dr. Louis Verner is a watchable-wildlife biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. With more than 25 years of experience as a university professor, ecologist and wildlife biologist, Verner's major interest is educating the public about the ecological and economic values associated with the conservation and restoration of wildlife habitats.

## March 30 Backyard birds

Mr. John Coe is the education chairman and former president of Richmond Audubon Society, a naturalist for Chesterfield Parks and Recreation, and a master gardener. With degrees in biology and photography from Virginia Commonwealth University, Coe has been able to combine his interests in the pursuit of "outdoor critters."

## April 6 Reptiles and amphibians in urban Richmond

Dr. Joseph Mitchell is a research scientist specializing in ecology and conservation biology and, over the past 20 years, has held teaching positions at the University of Richmond, The College of William and Mary, and Randolph Macon College. In addition he is the author of "The Reptiles of Virginia" and is presently writing "The Handbook of Snakes of the U.S. and Canada."

## April 20 Claws, jaws, stings and wings – insects and spiders of Virginia

Dr. Arthur Evans is a research associate at both the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., and the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville, Va. He is an entomologist, photographer and author; and his column "What's Bugging You?" appears the second Thursday of every month in the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

## April 27 Cotton rats or rotten cats: a backyard dilemma?

Dr. John Pagels, professor and director of the graduate program in biology at VCU has been studying mammals of Virginia for more than 35 years. Much of his research has involved the ecology and geographical distribution of small, nongame mammals, among them the cotton rat. Other special subjects have included the federally endangered northern flying squirrel and the state-listed rock vole.

## May 4 Mosquitoes and the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases

Dr. David Gaines is the state public health entomologist for the Virginia Department of Health. Gaines brings tremendous expertise to this topic, having worked as an urban/structural and agricultural entomologist, a researcher in insect field ecology, and an assessor for pesticide regulations in the U.S. as well as Mexico and Gambia.

## Schedule

Thursdays, 7 p.m., March 23 – May 4, 2006

No lecture on April 13

All lectures will be held at Maymont's Robins Nature & Visitor Center.

Reception at 6 p.m. preceding every lecture — galleries open.

Fee: \$5 per lecture or \$25 for the series. You may register in advance with Maymont Foundation, (804) 358-7166, ext. 325.

## Information

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